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### **Holiday Cooking Safety**

State Fire Marshal Coan said, "Sadly, during the holidays we see a spike in cooking fires and injuries." Because cooking has long been the leading cause for home fires and injuries the Department of Fire Services launched a statewide cooking fire safety public awareness campaign this fall to combat these fires and injuries. Television and radio public service announcements on cooking safety aired this fall, featuring local celebrity chef Ming Tsai.

Marshal Stephen D. Coan offers these tips to **prevent cooking fires**:

- **Stand by your pan**, when cooking. Never leave food, grease or oils cooking on the stovetop unattended.
- When simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, check it regularly, remain in the home while it's cooking, and use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.
- Wear short or tight-fitting sleeves when cooking, because loose fitting clothing can easily catch on fire.
- Keep potholders, oven mitts, wooden utensils, paper or plastic bags, towels, and other things that can catch fire, away from your stovetop.
- Plug microwave ovens and other cooking appliances directly into an outlet, not an extension cord.

Marshal Coan offers these tips to **react to cooking fires**:

- **Put a lid on it.** In the case of a grease fire on a pan, place the lid on the pan to smother the fire, and then turn off the heat. Water or fire extinguishers will not work. They will only spread the fire.
- Never move a burning pan. You can be badly burned or spread the fire.
- If your clothing catches fire, Stop, Drop and Roll to put out the flames.
- In case of an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed.
- If you have a microwave fire, immediately turn it off and keep the door closed.
- In case of an uncontrollable fire, leave the house and call 9-1-1.

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**Thanksgiving Deep Fried Turkey**

Deep fried turkey, an idea that originated in the south, is becoming more popular throughout the nation due to the method's ability to generate a moist turkey. These deep fry turkey cookers tend to be used on Thanksgiving as a new spin on the yearly turkey dinner. However, deep fry turkey cookers are very dangerous and can be deadly.

"Five gallons of boiling oil or grease over an open flame hardly sounds safe or sane," said Marshal Coan. Many of these fryers are very unstable, particularly the tripod models, which can tip over and pour the scalding contents onto an unsuspecting person or cause a very large fire in seconds. These fryers also have other fire hazards, including the likelihood to overheat to the point of combustion and also the likelihood of the sides of the cooking pot, lid and pot handles to get dangerously hot, all due to the lack of thermostat controls in some fryers or the defective temperature controls of other fryers. Underwriters Laboratories (UL), a nonprofit group that safety certifies appliances, has declined to put its UL safety mark on any turkey deep fryer, due to the fire hazards they produce.

The holidays are meant to be a time for families to get together, celebrate, and rejoice. Help the Department of Fire Services make Massachusetts a safer place and its citizens out of harm's way during the holidays.